



Photos by SSgt. Steve Ball

The Air Force Academy Catholic Cadet Choir performs at St. Mary's Church in Woolpit.

Academy choir performs in local area

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Public affairs

The only thing overshadowing the nearly 300 carved wooden angels adorning the ceiling of St. Mary's Church were the angelic voices of the Air Force Academy Catholic Cadet Choir as they performed Good Friday for the residents of Woolpit.

"With all of the technology we have today, I don't know why they can't build churches that sound like this," said Gary DeKler, assistant choir director, during one of the choir's intermissions. "The sound in this building is astounding. We (the choir members) are really loving this."

More than 150 people turned out at the 13-century church to listen to the cadets perform many traditional American and some English hymns. After a brief intermission and a change

of uniform, the performance took a turn and the choir performed more modern music with some members acting out skits as the choir transitioned from rock, to pop to country music.

Fifty one members of the choir were in the United Kingdom for their spring break. While here, choir members stayed with people from RAFs Lakenheath, Feltwell, Alconbury and Mildenhall.

"They had to pay for the entire trip themselves," said Margaret Fulham, Lakenheath Chapel Catholic religious education coordinator. "We wanted to help them keep it as low-cost as possible so we

asked base members if they would house the cadets. We needed 33 families and had no problem finding them."

Before the performance in Woolpit, which was set up by Rod and Ileen Jones, village residents, the cadets were treated to dinner in a village restaurant.

"The people in the village were thrilled to have the choir here," said Ileen, who is also the Catholic music coordinator at the



A member of the choir portrays a New Yorker during one of the choir's skits.

Lakenheath Chapel. "Their performance was outstanding."

While here, the cadets also performed at the Lakenheath Chapel Saturday night and Sunday morning, and at the Alconbury Chapel Sunday.

"The time change last night (Saturday) was really a killer," said Cadet First Class Mike Rambo. "We performed at the Catholic service last night, which ended at 12:30 a.m., and then had to get up by 5:30 a.m. which was actually 4:30 a.m., to make it to the Protestant sunrise service. But it is definitely worth it. We've had a really great time."

The whole vacation wasn't just work. While here, the cadets had four days to tour the area. Some went to Paris, some went to Amsterdam, some went to London and two of the cadets, Rambo and Cadet Second Class Joe Clansey went to Ireland to try and look up some of Clansey's family.

"These are a great group of cadets," said Chaplain (Lt. Col.) David Cote, Catholic chaplain at the academy and former chaplain at Lakenheath. "I really miss the 'family' at Lakenheath, but being part of developing tomorrow's leaders at the academy is a wonderful opportunity."

The cadets flew back to the states Monday following their performance at Alconbury.



Cadet First Class Kyle Benwitz talks about the academy with people attending the Woolpit performance.